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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

`Belated' condolences by President Bush - Hurriyet
Earthquake victims, furious, clash with police - Hurriyet 5/3
Rumsfeld took a 4.5 hour rest in Incirlik AB - Hurriyet
Rumsfeld stopped over Incirlik without a `Hello' to Ankara - Hurriyet 5/4
Powell brings five conditions for Damascus - Aksam
Bush: We'll eventually find Iraqi WMD - Sabah
Iraqi Shiites: Americans must leave - Sabah
U.S. to erase Iraq's international debt - Aksam
A Turkish FM in Rhodes after 15 years - Turkiye
EU signals 2004 for Turkey - Sabah
Gul: Turkey might recognize Greek Cypriot administration - Milliyet 5/4
Gul shook hands with Greek Cypriot counterpart - Aksam 5/4
Blair's Iraq policy brings Labour defeat in local election - Vatan 5/3

OPINION MAKERS

Washington closely follows Damascus - Zaman
Powell: Syria closed some anti-Israeli groups' offices - Zaman 5/4
Damascus gives a reluctant promise to Powell - Radikal 5/4
36 Turkish firms to Iraq's rebuilding meeting in U.S. - Zaman 5/4
Britain haven for fundamentalist terror - Cumhuriyet
EU friendship in Mediterranean - Radikal 5/4
Nicosia uneasy with Greek Cypriots flowing north - Radikal
De Soto: I'm a true fan of Denktas - Zaman
TOBB warns AKP for governance mistakes - Cumhuriyet 5/4

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Turkey can become distribution center for natural gas to Europe - Dunya
IMF cripples Turkey's earthquake budget - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Bingol earthquake: Weekend papers praise the swift action taken by rescue teams in Bingol earthquake, but strongly criticize the government's inefficiency in crisis management. The provincial governor was the focus of protests that turned into riots on Friday by locals complaining of slow food and tent distribution in the disaster area, papers report. Officials stated that rescue operations in the wreckage have come to an end. The earthquake struck the eastern province of Bingol early on Thursday, killing at least 167, including 84 boys and one teacher at the state-run school. The government promised a full investigation into allegations that the school dormitory had been shoddily built by corrupt contractors. Monday papers carry President Bush's earthquake message to Turkey, in which the President offered American nation's condolences and stressed that U.S. was ready to help Turkey by all means.

Iraq: Sunday's "Hurriyet" says in a front-page commentary that Secretary Rumsfeld, after his thank-you visit to Gulf countries, changed planes at the Incirlik Air Base before

proceeding to London. Hurriyet notes that Rumsfeld, still angry with Ankara for parliamentary rejection of the March 1 permission to deploy US ground troops in Turkey, has refrained from meeting with the Turkish officials. The commentary sees serious trouble in U.S., Turkey relations, and emphasizes that the State Department was trying to balance the 'emotional' reaction of the DOD. A Monday op-ed in "Hurriyet" hopes that Washington will not start a 'blood feud' over Ankara's refusal to open the Northern Front. It also advises Turkey to implement 'pragmatic policies' after the war, as has been seen in the changing attitude of France. Foreign Minister Gul said to "Sabah" on the Greek island of Rhodes on Sunday that Secretary Rumsfeld had not called him while in Incirlik. 'However, our contacts with American officials continue,' Gul noted. Monday's broadcasters report an ongoing debate between the 'hawkish' Pentagon and 'moderate' State Department regarding whether Turkish companies should be given a share from Iraq's rebuilding. Sunday papers say Secretary Powell has softened his tone during his Syria visit, but urged President Assad to close the offices of fundamentalist, anti-Israeli terror groups in Damascus.

Washington conference for rebuilding Iraq: 34 Turkish companies will participate in the strategic May 5 Washington meetings for the reconstruction of Iraq, weekend papers report. Turkey's Union of Chambers (TOBB) and many construction firms are to join the meetings. Local media reports that Turkish companies have technical equipment and price advantages in the international attempt for grabbing a share in Iraq's rebuilding.

EU foreign ministers' Rhodes meeting: EU foreign ministers, among them the Turkish and Greek Cypriot ministers Gul and Yakovu, came together in the Greek island of Rhodes over the weekend. Papers quote Gul voicing hope after the meetings that the EU accession talks with Turkey could be given a start in 2004. Greek and Greek Cypriot foreign ministers Papandreou and Yakou gave a warm welcome to Gul. The group made a boat tour to Turkey's coastal town of Kas on Saturday, winning applause from residents. Papandreou and Gul said they had decided both states should simultaneously present the UN with accords they had ratified banning landmines on the border between the two countries, reports note. "Our common borders must be respected, but they must be borders of peace and collaboration," Papandreou said. Gul urged the removal of international sanctions on Turkish Cypriots, and vowed for some new 'openings' by Ankara, among them recognition of the Greek Cypriot state, Sunday papers report. Papers hail the EU foreign ministers' 'goodwill gesture' of coming to Kas, giving a message just before the tourism season that Turkey was a safe country.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

- a) Middle East
- b) US-Turkey-Syria

"The Roadmap"
Soli Ozel wrote in mass appeal Sabah (5/4): "The roadmap did not receive opposition from the Palestinian side, yet Israel has already expressed reservations on 12 points and asked for US facilitative help on this. . It is also a known fact that Ariel Sharon wants the possible Palestine state to only have 42 percent of the occupied lands. The litmus test for the Middle East roadmap is whether or not the US is going to put pressure on Israel. In case President Bush ignores the need for pressuring Israel on the eve of presidential elections, violence will continue to be the destiny of the region."

"Ankara and Damascus"
Yasemin Congar opined from Washington in mass appeal Milliyet (5/5): "Both the Ankara and Damascus visits by Secretary Powell have something in common: They resulted

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from Powell's personal initiative and justification. Powell made the decision personally as well as suddenly, and he made all the efforts to persuade the administration of the urgency of the visits. Powell managed to convince the White House, and thus the two visits took place. However, signs from the Pentagon tell us that the US Defense side is not unhappy only about the Damascus visit, but the Ankara visit as well. . When Secretary Powell visited Ankara, it was interpreted as a strong message to underline the US position on northern Iraq and to underline the bilateral ties with Turkey. Yet the way the decision mechanism worked

on the visit indicates that the Bush administration is still preserving a certain degree of disappointment. Given that fact, one can understand even better the reason for Secretary Rumsfeld's avoiding contact with Ankara even

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though he came to Incirlik airbase."

PEARSON